

VZCZCXRO7071
OO RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #0376/01 0721612
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131612Z MAR 06
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6778
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0593
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000376

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 23

REF: LAGOS 367

Classified By: Acting Political/Economic Chief Shannon Ross
for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

Summary

¶1. (C) There was very little substantive activity for the second weekend in a row, with few confirmed reports following the Cody Oswalt call to Conoff Friday night. Ijaw leaders and elders held a meeting Friday and released a communique calling for the hostages' release. NGO Director Judy Asuni said she coordinated an Ijaw youth meeting to resolve the remaining issues, and Asuni also agreed to facilitate delivery of family letters to the remaining hostages. There were no additional attacks on oil installations, but Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) reportedly suspended offloading of petroleum products to the Warri Refinery Jetty due to security concerns. FEST leader Mark Thompson is traveling to Abuja to confer with the Ambassador and refine the Mission approach going forward. End summary.

Hostage Welfare Update

¶2. (C) Willbros confirmed Cody Oswalt was the only hostage allowed to call family Friday night. There have been no additional statements about the hostages' condition since Oswalt's call, when he said they were in good health and being well treated.

¶3. (C) FBI is facilitating production by CNN of a humanitarian plea for the remaining hostages' release by released AmCit Macon Hawkins.

Hostage Negotiations

¶4. (C) An Ijaw leader who participated in last Friday's meeting in Yenagoa of Ijaw Elders told Polcouns the meeting

was arranged by Bayelsa Governor Goodluck Jonathan under pressure from President Obasanjo. The leader said a communique would be issued calling for the hostages' release and increasing the derivation, or percentage of oil revenues allocated to the oil producing states, to 50 percent from the current 13 percent. (Note: Media reports about the communique indicate it fell short of the expected "ultimatum" from Ijaw elders to the militant youths described to us last week. End note.) The Ijaw source also described the formation of a larger committee comprised of 5 representatives each from Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States to meet with the President and "solve the Delta crisis."

¶15. (C) Judy Asuni told Conoff she helped organize an Ijaw youth meeting in Warri today, and said they hoped to resolve the issues delaying the hostages' release today. Shell sources in contact with the federal government report confidence the crisis will be resolved in the next day or so.

¶16. (C) Willbros' Clay Etheridge communicated his expectation of good news this week to Delta Governor Ibori, to which Ibori was noncommittal. Willbros is facilitating transfer of additional letters from the hostages' families to Judy Asuni, for delivery to the hostage-takers. (Note: There is still no indication the hostages received any family letters previously given to Governor Ibori for delivery to the hostage-takers. End note.)

Energy Update

¶17. (C) There are no significant updates.

LAGOS 00000376 002 OF 002

Military Update

¶18. (C) There are no significant updates.

Media Update

¶19. (SBU) Print media reported two GON officials, Police Affairs Minister Broderick Bozimo and Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ganiyu Adekeye, stated the GON may have to use force if dialogue does not free the hostages. However, some prominent Nigerians, including sources in the military, have called for a peaceful resolution. Some Ijaw militants also reportedly disavowed any links with Al Qaeda suggested by some media last week.

¶110. (SBU) The Punch reported the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has suspended import of petroleum products into the Warri Refinery Jetty because of repeated attacks on approaching vessels. The Martyrs' Brigade 21-day ultimatum first reported in Nigerian media last week has reached the international media.

Consular Update

¶111. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits. One mission Conoff is in Warri monitoring negotiations and prepared to assist with repatriation. The UK also has a consular officer in Warri to monitor negotiations and assist with repatriation. The head of Shell Security is on standby for repatriation assistance.
HOWE